

September 23, 1999

CalFed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 115
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Mr. Rick Breitenbach

Attached please find the presentation I was going to make at the CalFed Public Hearing held in Sacramento on September 22, 1999. Unfortunately, I was required to leave before my name was called to speak. I was informed that if I mailed my presentation with a postmark no later than September 23, 1999 it would receive equal consideration to the material presented at the Public Hearing. I would appreciate it if you would add the attached presentation material to all the other information received related to CalFed's hearing on its draft EIR/EIS for consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald Bachman".

Ronald Bachman, Director
Northridge Water District

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Presentation to CALFED-9/22/99

CalFed has been working for several years to come up with an EIS/EIR (Plan) which will lead to the repair and enhancement of the environment while enabling people south of the Delta to divert water. The draft Plan has many fine elements contained in it, and discusses methods to be used which will monitor the effects of applying these elements. In my opinion, while this approach is a lot better than has occurred in the water wars of the past, the Plan still has not changed the basic approach of the past which is to take water from the north and provide it to water poor areas in the south. This Plan will lengthen the time it will take for another water war to occur, but using this approach the water wars will inevitably occur again in the future. The basic approach is flawed.

Basically, it is assumed that northern California cannot use all the water that is precipitated upon it. While this may be true at this time, application of the Plan will surely impede growth in northern California by reducing the water that would be available. The areas and counties of origin that currently have some protection in water law will be precluded from obtaining water to which they have an inchoate right because to exercise this right, simply put, requires them to purchase the water right even though they have first call on the water. I don't believe any political entity will be able to afford purchasing these water rights after all the work, studies, construction, etc., that could be performed, as indicated in the Plan, will be completed. Thus, northern California is relegated to be a resource of southern California rather than to be its partner.

Instead, I propose that northern and southern California be true partners. This can be accomplished not by taking northern water but instead by using northern dollars. If the water is allowed to remain in the north and the expanding population of northern California provides ever increasing amounts of tax dollars (from the expanding population) to the south, both poles of California can prosper. These dollars can be used to develop and build more treatment plants to provide recycled water to agriculture and more desalination plants along the coast with the distribution and pumping facilities needed to provide the water where it is needed. Meanwhile northern California can look to the future assured that its growth can continue since it will have the water needed to provide to its citizenry. In addition, the environment will be allowed to heal, since humankind will stop trying to make major modifications to change the natural flow cycle of the watershed.

Adaptive management is discussed in the CalFed approach and this sounds like an honest attempt to review everything that is occurring under the Plan, changing things that appear to need change and enhancing steps that appear to be working. In my opinion, we are deluding ourselves. The Bay-Delta and its watershed is a very complex system, as I am sure you are all well aware. Changes may appear to occur in 3-5 years in certain habitats or ecosystems, but there will have been so many factors that could have caused them that it is highly uncertain that we will be able to find the cause for those changes. Was there a change in the weather pattern (rain cycle, temperature cycle, etc.), did we take or overlook some action, was there a smaller fishing fleet during the last fishing period, and so on and so forth? Again, instead, I recommend

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that we don't play with the management of the northern watershed but transport dollars rather than water. An added attraction to this approach is that we won't have to spend funds on the complex studies needed for adaptive management, which in itself simplifies the entire system and saves many dollars that instead can be used to take positive actions.



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Director-Sacramento North Area Groundwater
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